REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated October 6, 2005.

Disposition of the Claims

Claims 17 – 29 are currently pending and stand rejected.

Amendment of the Claims

Claim 17 is amended to incorporate the limitation presented in claim 20. Claim 20 is canceled.

Claims 26 – 29 are canceled without prejudice.

Amendment of the Specification

The abstract is amended to be less than 150 words in length.

Rejections

Claims 26 – 29 are rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter with the Applicants regard as the invention. In addition, claims 26 – 28 are rejected as improper claims of a "use".

Claims 26 – 29 are canceled without prejudice.

Claims 17 – 25 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Trepka et al (US Patent 6,265,485) in view of Knoll et al (US Patent 6,197,889) and further in view of Himes (US Patent 5,750,622).

The Examiner correctly notes that Trepka et al discloses a copolymer comprising monovinylaromatic monomers and conjugated diene monomer and that a randomizer is used. However, the copolymer of Trepka et al is a tapered copolymer and is described in detail in column 7, lines 14 – 18. There Trepka et al teaches that "when both the monovinylaromatic monomer and the conjugated diene are present, the block tapers gradually from and essentially polybutadiene block to an essentially monovinyl substituted aromatic polymer block." An

"essentially monovinyl substituted aromatic polymer block" is understood to be a long run of monovinylaromatic monomers and as such could not possibly have a blockiness index of less than 40%. Applicants invention, as presently claimed, reads on a copolymer having, as one essential element, a low blockiness (less than 40%) of the monovinylaromatic monmer. Applicants refer to this unique arrangement as a controlled distribution copolymer. Trepka et al does not teach nor suggest copolymers having monovinylaromatic blockiness less than 40%. There is no teaching or suggestion of Applicants controlled distribution copolymer structure.

Further, Trepka et al is directed toward polymers having low blueness and acceptable impact strength and ductility (col 1, lines 54 – 60). There is no teaching or suggestion of adhesives which are able to join leather and non-polar substrates.

Knoll et al discloses a block copolymer having blocks of similar molecular weights to those claimed by Applicants. But, the teaching of Knoll et al is directed to strictly random copolymers (col. 2, lines 54 – 64). Knoll et al cannot motivate one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Trepka to make solvent-free adhesives comprising controlled distribution block copolymers having monovinylaromatic blockiness index less than 40%.

Also, one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that resins could be combined with block copolymers. However, there is no teaching in Trepka et al of hydrogenated resins used to tackify the copolymer block (or soft phase) or of glassy resins to modify the mono alkenyl arene A blocks. An obviousness rejection cannot be applied simply because a combination is "obvious to try" (MPEP 2145(B)). Some suggestion or motivation must exist to make the combination or modification. Neither Trepka et al alone nor in combination with Knoll et al provides any motivation to make Applicant's invention comprising a controlled distribution block copolymer, a hydrogenated tackifying resin, a resin compatible with the A blocks, and optionally a flow promoting poly(alkenyl) resin as an adhesive to bond polar leather and non-polar substrates.

While Himes teaches resins for both the soft phase and for the glassy phase, there is no teaching or suggestion of solvent-free, hot melt adhesives used to join leather and non-polar substrates. Himes only generically discloses hot melt adhesives and does not teach or suggest any substrates. Further, Himes does not teach or suggest the amounts or types of resins proscribed by Applicants current claim limitations. For instance, Applicants claim hydrogenated tackifying resins (claim 17(b)) having a softening point lower than 140°C, preferably lower than 100°C and more preferably lower than 90°C, in a weight proportion of 30 to 150 parts by weight of

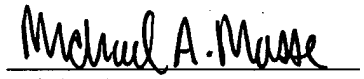
tackifying resin per 100 parts per weight of block copolymer and preferably from 50 to 120 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of block copolymer. That such a combination of a controlled distribution block copolymer and a hydrogenated resin would make a solvent-free, hot melt adhesive composition would be able to bond polar leather and non-polar substrates is in no way taught or suggested by Himes. The same can be said of the resin compatible with the A block (claim 17(c)). Neither Trepka et al alone nor in combination with Himes provides any teaching, suggestion or motivation to make Applicant's invention comprising a controlled distribution block copolymer, a hydrogenated tackifying resin, a resin compatible with the A blocks, and optionally a flow promoting poly(alkenyl) resin as an adhesive to bond polar leather and non-polar substrates.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Having addressed all issues set out in the Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 9, 2006



Michael A. Masse
Agent for Applicants
Registration Number 53,281
KRATON Polymers U.S. LLC
3333 Highway 6 South, Rm. CA-110
Houston, Texas 77082
281-668-3154 (Phone)
281-668-3239 (Fax)